

Children and Family Council for Prevention Programs
Vermont Agency of Human Services
Department for Children and Families

Summary
OJJDP
Fiscal Years 2006—2008
Comprehensive 3-Year Plan

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Introduction to the executive summary

As recipient of federal Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention funds from the Office of Justice Programs, the VT Agency of Human Services and its governor-appointed State Advisory Group, the Children and Family Council for Prevention Programs (CFCPP) is required to:

- Maintain 4 core protections for all youth who have contact with the juvenile or criminal justice system. These core protections and the state's plan for monitoring and compliance are delineated in appendix #2 of this plan summary.
- Develop a data driven analysis of delinquency, crime, and well-being of the state's youth,
- Define prevention priorities (also defined by 33VSA:33), and
- Fund evidence-based interventions designed to prevent juvenile delinquency.

List of State's priority juvenile justice needs:

Overarching program goals defined by State Team for Children and Families:

- Outcome 1: Families, youth, and individuals are engaged in their community's decisions and activities
- Outcome 2: Pregnant women and young children thrive
- Outcome 3: Children are ready for school
- Outcome 4: Children succeed in school
- Outcome 5: Children live in stable, supported families
- Outcome 6: Youth choose healthy behaviors
- Outcome 7: Youth successfully transition to adulthood
- Outcome 10: Communities provide safety and support for families and individuals

1. Delinquency Prevention

The CFCPP, state, and community partners agree, that *prevention* of juvenile delinquency is the most socially and cost effective means of addressing delinquency, its precursors, and the ever-growing burden of adult corrections.

Program objectives: delinquency prevention grants will be funded that address these areas:

1. child abuse and neglect prevention programs
2. mentoring and out of school supports
3. substance abuse prevention
4. violence, bullying, and dating violence prevention

5. promotion of positive youth development, literacy, school readiness, positive activities, civic and community engagement
6. research project to identify state-specific poverty factors that are most likely to be linked with delinquency
7. support for youth development-focused workforce training that will improve systemic and individual responses to youth encountering systems designed to serve and sanction them
8. local Disproportionate Minority Contact prevention efforts
9. technical assistance to sub-grantees

Budget: \$164,670 JJDP funds / year for 3 years

State general fund allocation, CTF tax check off donations, and Children's Trust Foundation allocation combine with the JJDP dollars for a total annual allocation of roughly \$400,000/year.

2. Juvenile Justice System Improvement

As effective as early prevention efforts may be, time-limited grant projects tend to address short-term community youth needs. Still, there are youth with multiple risk factors who enter the justice and service systems.

Funds from this program area will prioritize the assessment, recommendations, action-planning, and initial implementation of projects that will improve the way youth are treated in community and state systems that serve them. Of long-term importance and priority to the CFCPP, is the consideration of all youth within a developmentally appropriate *youth* justice system.

Program objectives:

1. Assess the multi-system impact of addressing all juvenile delinquency and criminal cases filed on youth within the juvenile justice systems. The assessment will develop fiscal and strategic action plan and timeline for consideration by state government and legislature.
2. Alternatives to Detention / detention reform
3. Disproportionate Minority Contact
4. Gender-specific services
5. Mental health /substance abuse services – system enhancement
6. Youth development workforce training, recommendations and support for development of program standards, and dissemination of program standards
7. Improved supports to youth transitioning to adulthood, including employment supports, supports targeted to high school dropouts and those at risk of dropout, homeless, runaway, and youth in foster care.

8. Fund evaluation of local VT best practice models of truancy and dropout prevention. Publish and disseminate models evaluated as effective.
9. Data needs: accurate collection of demographic data, especially re: DMC, compliance monitoring, community needs assessment and program outcomes.
10. Support systemic leadership to prevent school dropout statewide, promote policies that will keep all children and youth engaged in learning, training, and employment opportunities that support successful transition to adulthood.
11. Technical assistance to subgrantees to enable improved outcomes, program sustainability, and use of effective practice
12. Fund efforts to build and sustain a network of transitional housing supports for youth as they prepare to transition to adulthood

The target population of these efforts is youth identified at risk, and those involved in components of the juvenile justice system.

Budget: \$334,330 / year for 3 years

Technical assistance through OJJDP, NTTAC, and the National Governor's Association will be utilized where available to augment these efforts.

3. Compliance Monitoring

Compliance Monitoring assures that the state maintains compliance with JJDP requirements. It will identify system deficiencies and individual violations. The Compliance Monitor and the JJDP Specialist will develop effective correction plans. While the short-term goal is compliance, the long-term goal is to assure a humane and safe juvenile justice system.

Budget: JJDP funds of \$11,000/ year for each of 3 years

4. Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC)

Since the 2000 U.S. Census, VT has found emergent trends indicating DMC. Also during the past four years, VT has been working steadily to increase available data and its accessibility to identify and assess causes of DMC.

Data improvements to complete requirements are expected to be accomplished in FY 06 – 07.

Trends indicating DMC at arrest and juvenile detention are evident. Completion of required data collection will determine rates of minority contact within juvenile and adult courts.

The CFCPP is concerned about indicators of disproportionate justice system contact among refugee and ethnic minorities in the state's most populous city and county. The CFCPP is committed to preventing DMC from developing.

DMC goals and objectives:

1. Fund the development of a strategic plan to address the prevention and early intervention of DMC in VT.
2. Establish a part-time DMC Coordinator contract to identify, assess, recommend and facilitate state and local interventions.
3. Fund local and systemic prevention and system improvement interventions that will address the data-based root causes of DMC with best practice interventions. Evaluate interventions.
4. Maintain efforts with the AHS and other parties to establish use of a valid risk assessment instrument to objectify secure detention placements.
5. Continue work with the AHS departments, especially DCF, to support creation of alternatives to detention focused on specific data-based need, following the recommendations of DMC assessments and CFCPP Detention Alternatives Committee. (2002, 2005 data)
6. Identify need, request, and guide implementation of OJJDP technical assistance to support identified priorities.

Appendix I

Plans for Compliance with the Core Requirements of the JJDP Act and the State's Plan for Compliance Monitoring

1. Deinstitutionalization of Status Offenders (Removal of Status Offenders and Non-offenders from Secure Detention and Correctional Facilities)

Vermont had insignificant violations of Section 223(a) (11) of the JJDP Act during FY05, the most recent report period, and similar or lower violations in preceding years. The state is in full compliance with JJDP Act section 223(a) (11). State statute, policy, monitoring procedures, and education practices prevent these violations.

The five violations during the most recent report period included:

- A non-offender, mental health emergency instance where individual was agitated, threatening and was detained.
- Four violations occurred at the juvenile detention center. All of the violations were judicial placements of youth (3 individuals) who violated their probation conditions when the probation was based on an underlying charge of possession of malt beverage.

2. Separation of Juveniles from Adult Offenders

- There are no co-located juvenile / adult detention or correctional facilities in VT
- State statute, policy, and practice prevent juveniles from entering state-operated adult jail or correctional facilities. There were no violations of this statute or practice in FY05 or recent years.

Though there is clear prohibition of sight and sound contact between adults and juveniles in detention, during FY05, it became known that one or more communities in the state had practiced jail tours for youth diverted from delinquent or criminal charges.

Immediate steps were taken to eliminate jail tour practice in VT facilities.

3. Removal of Juveniles from Adult Jails and Lockups

During 2005, compliance monitoring found that in an attempt to create an alternative to secure jail detention for youth charged or convicted of adult misdemeanor crimes, the state Department of Corrections had contracted with a new sheriff's facility to house misdemeanor youth detained by courts. The state system has no designated placements for these misdemeanor youth, except rare placement in the juvenile detention center. This detention option was developed under an outdated understanding that youth in the adult system are not subject to the JJDP Act core protections.

Immediate corrective action ended the practice of these detentions and further clarified the requirement that youth may not be detained beyond 6 hours in any adult jail or lockup.

4. Plan for Compliance with the Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) Core Requirement

DMC-reduction Plan for FY 2006-2008

1. Data collection improvements
2. Information and technical assistance to identified communities/ regions/ system components
3. Grant funds to intervention as appropriate
4. Multi-year DMC strategic plan
5. Hire part-time DMC coordinator
6. Monitor and assess indicators of DMC at all system contact points

Plan for Compliance Monitoring for the First Three Core Requirements of the JJDP Act

VT participated in a 5-year compliance monitoring audit during June 2005. VT has adopted the informal recommendations made by OJJDP staff at the conclusion of that audit. The state maintains a comprehensive system to assure compliance with all JJDP requirements.

Appendix II

Analysis of Juvenile Crime Problems and Juvenile Justice Needs

Juvenile Crime Problems

Vermont youth are involved in both juvenile and adult justice systems; selected highlights from court data to age 20 are presented below. Source: Juvenile Justice Sourcebook, VT Center for Justice Research, (Clements, Owen, Denton, 2004).

Juvenile Delinquency Case Highlights

- The number of delinquency cases filed in FY2004 was 1,409, close to the number filed in FY03.
- The FY2004 filing rate of 20.1 cases per 1,000 youth increased by 8% from the FY2003 level of 18.6.
- Bennington (38.4) and Rutland (25.2) counties experienced the highest case filing rates. Seven counties experienced an increase in filing rates from FY2003 to FY2004 with the highest occurring in Addison and Chittenden counties.
- The delinquency case filing rate (20.8) in FY04 for Chittenden County, the state's largest caseload contributor, increased by 36% from the FY03 level but was still below the ten year average of 23.8 cases per 1,000 youth.
- Some 1,063 individuals accounted for 1,844 charges filed in delinquency cases during FY2004.
- Fifteen year olds experienced the highest delinquency charge filing rates while the highest rates of criminal charge filings were for 20 year olds.
- Almost 71% delinquency charges were filed against males in FY2004.
- The most prevalent delinquency charges for 10-15 year olds in FY2004 were simple assault (213), unlawful mischief (164), alcohol possession/furnishing (159) and disorderly conduct (121).
- The most prevalent delinquency charges for 16-17 year olds in FY2004 were simple assault (49), disorderly conduct (42) and unlawful mischief (40).

*(*VT 3-yr plan author note: the lower proportion of PMB, 'possession of malt beverage' charges against 16 and 17 year-old youth v. 10 – 15 year-olds is likely explained by the practice of filing delinquency petition on youth under age 16, while the PMB civil ticket process is used for youth over age 16 for up to 2 offenses.)*

- The percent of alcohol possession/furnishing by original charge decreased by 18% for 16-17 year olds from FY03 to FY04. However, for males the percent for this category increased by 14%.
- Females were most frequently charged with simple assault (16.2%), alcohol possession/furnishing (15.0%), shoplifting (14.2%) or disorderly conduct (14.2%) as the basis of a delinquency case.
- In FY2004, 38% of delinquency charges were for property offenses, 25% were for violent offenses, 16% were for drug offenses, 13% were for public order offenses, and the remaining 8% was comprised of motor vehicle, vs. justice, and other offenses.
- For males property crimes accounted for 42% of delinquency cases for FY2004 compared to 30% for females. Females, on the other hand, committed a larger proportion of drug crimes (21%) than did males (14%).
- Excluding missing and unknown, about 69% of the delinquency charges filed resulted in a release at the first hearing. The remaining charges were either released to SRS custody (24%) or placed in the Woodside facility (6%).
- Almost 3 in 10 of the delinquency charges disposed in FY2004 were referred to diversion.
- Around 32% of the delinquency charges disposed in FY2004 received probation.
- A total of 1,844 delinquency charges were filed for FY2004. Males accounted for 1,201 and females 494 of the charges; gender was not available for 149 charges.
- A delinquency finding was the result for 910 FY2004 charges, or 49% of the total number of charges filed.
- About 5% (47 charges) of the delinquency findings in FY2004 were the result of diversion failures.
- For those whose status could be determined (1,075 charges), most juveniles were released to the custody of a parent or guardian (55%) or an unspecified release (19%) at disposition. About 25% were released to SRS custody of some type.
- A total of 582 illegal possession of alcohol charges were filed between FY2002-2004 for an average of 194 per year.
- 187 delinquency charges for illegal possession of alcohol by a minor were filed in FY2004, primarily to 14-16 year olds. This marked an increase of 8% from the FY03 number.

District Court Criminal Case Highlights

- The number of criminal charges disposed in 2003 for persons age 16-20 was 6,906, a 6% decline from the previous year.
- The number of criminal charges disposed increased by 52% during the ten year period from 1994 to 2003, however, from 2000 (8,930) to 2003 (6,906) the number declined by 23%.
- The delinquency filings increased slightly while the number of criminal dispositions for youthful offenders declined slightly over the past year from 2002 to 2003.
- The 2003 disposition rate of 151.2 charges per 1,000 youth ages 16-20 was slightly lower than the 2002 rate of 157.8 charges per 1,000 youth.
- The number of charges for illegal possession of alcohol by a minor decreased slightly in 2003 to 814 with 537 ending in conviction. Charges for this offense were considerably lower in 2003 than the 10 year average of 1,373 charges with 761 ending in convictions.
- The number of 2003 citations for .02 BAC (328) decreased by 34% from the 2002 figure of 497. The enactment of a “zero tolerance” law and increased enforcement were most likely responsible for much of the increase in 1998. - 64% of felony charges filed against youthful offenders in 2003 were for property offenses while 19% were for violent offenses.
- Drug and alcohol offenses accounted for 35% and property offenses 25% of misdemeanor filings in 2003.
- Males accounted for the majority (82%) of charges filed in 2003, as has been the case in previous years.
- Relatively few charges are transferred from District Court to Family Court each year with 25 felony, 86 misdemeanor, and 4 motor vehicle criminal charges transferred in 2003.
- Criminal charges involving youth age 20 and younger comprised 26% of all felony, 32% of all misdemeanor and 13% of all motor vehicle charges filed in 2003.
- The number of felony charges filed against offenders age 20 or younger (1,288) increased by 9% from the 2002 level while non-motor vehicle misdemeanor filings (4,435) declined by 10%.
- The charge filing rate per 1,000 persons age 20 or less was 104.6, down from 108.9 in 2002 and significantly greater than the rate of 77.8 experienced 10 years earlier in 1993.
- The most frequent felony charges filed against persons age 16-20 in 2003 were burglary (280) and forgery/counterfeiting (138). Other prevalent charges included drugs (134) and grand larceny (111).

- The number of property crime filings was greater for 17 and 18 year olds in 2003, while drug crime filings were higher for persons age 19 and 20.
- The most frequent misdemeanor charges filed against persons age 16-20 in 2003 were alcohol violations (850), drugs (719), failure to appear (566), and disorderly conduct (341).
- Careless and negligent driving (46), DWI-1st (39) and operating without the owner's consent (29) were the most frequently filed motor vehicle charges for 16-17 year old offenders, while driving with a suspended license (347), DWI-1st (281) and careless and negligent driving (144) were the most frequently filed charges for persons age 18-20.
- About 59% of the charges filed against persons age 16-20 resulted in a conviction with the remainder either not prosecuted or dismissed in 2003.
- The proportion of convictions that are for drug offenses increased slightly from 2002 (23.5%) to 2003 (24.3%). Conversely, the proportion of convictions for property offenses declined slightly to 27.7% during the same period.
- Drug offenses (26%) accounted for the greatest number of convictions among persons age 18-20 while property offense convictions were the greatest for 16-17 year olds at 38%.
- Incarceration rates in 2003 were the highest for crimes against justice (37%) and property offenses (20%), followed by public order (19%) and drugs (17%) offenses.
- About 16% of the conviction charges for persons age 20 or less resulted in a deferred sentence in 2003, similar to recent years.
- Most persons (60%) age 20 or younger were charged with only one offense during 2003. About 20% had two charges while the remaining 20% had 3 or more charges during the same period.
- Almost 27% of the 3,611 persons age 20 or younger charged in District Court were age 16-17 while 48% were age 18-19. Four people age 15 were charged in 2003.
- The number of persons age 16-17 under Department of Corrections custody decreased to 152 in 2004, a decline of 9% from the 2003 number.
- The number of youths age 16-17 on probation under Department of Corrections custody decreased from 149 in 2003 to 140 in 2004, a 6% decline from 2003.

(2004, Clements, Owen, Denton, VT Center for Justice Research, Montpelier, VT)

Number of cases handled informally (non-petitioned) and formally (petitioned) by gender, race, and type of disposition:

Informal cases: There are a variety of precharge programs operated by municipal police, school resource officers, community justice centers, and schools. Many utilize restorative justice methods which have been supported with training efforts throughout the state. They are not consistently funded or available in every community. Because these are operated independently, there is no database or tracking of how many cases are informally handled. The consequences of non-participation in these programs may include a formal charge filing, or suspension from school, but none have consequences that require data tracking.

Highlights of formal charges brought against youth for the last 3 years (2002 – 2004) show:

Gender: 60% male, 30% female, 10% unknown gender. This is aligned with the gender breakdown of youth supervised on probation.

Race/ethnicity: there is inadequate data to determine race and ethnic origins within the juvenile court system; the VT Court Administrators Office has committed to remedy this problem during this fiscal year. The adult court system shows a 5% rate of minorities charged criminally. This rate is 1% higher than the population. The Family Court rate of delinquency filings against youth are lower than expected for racial minority groups; it is not clear if this is because more minority youth are charged in adult court, or because of the poor data available for race of youth charged in Family Court. This question illustrates the importance of complete data collection.

Dual system and criminalization of delinquents: although state statute sets age of majority at 18 and allows for delinquency charges to that age, in practice, the vast majority of minor infractions of the law committed by 16 and 17 year old juveniles are charged and processed through the adult systems. For the 3-year period ending 2004:

- 81% of 16 & 17 year-olds were charged and processed as adults
- For 16 year-olds:
63% were charged as adults v. 37% juvenile charges
- For 17 year-olds:
93% were charged as adults, and 7% as juveniles

Court Diversion: for the most recent 3 year period of court data, 30% of all juvenile cases in both systems were referred to Diversion.

Drug/alcohol-related charges: the combined juvenile and criminal courts data shows a 23% rate of drug/alcohol related charges including possession of malt beverage, driving intoxicated, and possession of marijuana. Nearly all first-time charges against an individual are referred to Court Diversion.

Number of delinquent and status offenders admitted, by gender and race, to juvenile detention facilities and adult jails and lockups.

Juvenile detention facility:

In FY05, there were 277 delinquent youth admitted to juvenile detention. Nearly 13% of those youth were of minority race origin. The statewide 10 – 17 year old minority population is 4%, and the most populous county, Chittenden, has a youth minority population of 6%. Because the juvenile detention capacity in VT is so tiny (18 beds), the rate of Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) is not, and can not be statistically significant. Still, the CFCPP and DCF are concerned about this rate, and about the multi-year trend of DMC at Woodside Detention.

All admissions to juvenile detention are adjudicated or charged as delinquent, except for violations that have been articulated in the most recent VT Compliance Monitoring Report.

Female admissions were 33% of total, consistent with recent trend data.

Adult jails and lockups:

7 of 119 police detentions were of minority youth; just under 6%. This is slightly higher than the percentage of VT minority youth. These raw numbers are too few to be reliable, but will receive on-going monitoring attention.

Other social, economic, legal, and organizational conditions considered relevant to delinquency prevention programming.

The Dual system of juvenile and adult justice as highlighted above has been a historic high concern for the CFCPP and youth advocates. Pending legislation to address juveniles in Family Court jurisdiction has not been addressed in this legislative biennium, but is likely to be re-introduced.

Civil tickets for PMB (possession malt beverage): in FY 2005 there were 3,312 civil tickets issued for PMB. 3/4ths (77%) of these referrals to the Teen Alcohol Safety Program (TASP) resulted in successful completions. The TASP was created in order to reduce criminalization of the very common PMB charge for youth aged 16 – 21. Youth under age 16 are referred to Family Court in these cases.

Overall climate and factors relevant to the general population of VT youth:

“*A Profile of the Social Well-being of Vermonters, 2005*” (Murphey, AHS) that compares the most recent 5-year trends on health data of VT residents with national data shows:

- VT children rank 2nd nationally in # who have health insurance
- 46th national rank for teen motor vehicle crash deaths related to alcohol
- 3rd rank for teen (ages 15 – 19) birth rate
- 6th rank of youth not attending school and not working. Estimates of 6% non-working or schooled youth aged 16 – 19, down from 11% during previous 5-year period.
- Youth unemployment is 13% per Department of Labor estimates.

The bi-annual *Youth Risk Behavior Survey* (YRBS) (VT Dept. of Health, 2003), administered to public high school youth excerpts:

Physical Fighting:

- Nearly 60 percent of adolescents report at least one episode of dating violence,
- 20 percent report they had experienced forced sex.
- 27% of VT youth report physical fighting among peers; this rate is steady since 1999 when it declined from previous high of 45%

Vehicle Safety - Driving Under the Influence:

- Motor vehicle crash injuries are the leading cause of death among youth aged 15 to 24 in the US.
- **19 of 60 (32%) deaths of 15 to 24 year olds in Vermont in 2001 were due to motor vehicle crashes.**

Suicide:

- Suicide is the **second leading cause of death among VT youth aged 15 to 19.**

Alcohol Use:

- **The majority of students do not drink.** Overall, 39 percent of students drank alcohol, steadily declining from 53 percent in 1995.
- **Approximately, one out of four HS students binge drink.** (during the past 30 days)
- **Binge drinking is decreasing.**

Tobacco

- Smoking continues to decline.

Marijuana Use

- **The majority of students have never tried marijuana.**
- Overall, 41 percent of students have tried marijuana, down slightly.
- **¼ of VT HS students use marijuana in past 30 days**
- Inhalant use down since 1995

Positive Trends from YRBS:

- **Seatbelt use increased**
- **Physical fighting decreased**
- **Riding with drinking drivers has decreased since 1995**
- **Drinking and driving has decreased since 1985.** Among 12th graders, drinking and driving decreased from 42 percent in 1985 to 16 percent in 2003.

Measures of Youth Assets (factors promoting positive development)

Grades in School: The majority of students receive above average grades -73%

Parents Involvement in School:

- Three-fourths (75%) of parents talk with their students about school weekly or more often.
- 8 % of students reported that their parents never talk with them about school.

Participation in youth programs and service to community / youth as resource:

- Almost three out of 10 (28%) participate in clubs outside of school.
- Almost half (45%) of Vermont students volunteer their time.

Youth valued by their community:

- Less than half (46%) of students report that students help decide what goes on at their school.
- Less than half (42%) of students feel valued by their community.

The Department of Corrections also administers the YRBS to its Community High School students. A few findings from that YRBS serve to highlight prevention and early intervention needs in VT:

COMPARING YOUTH RISK BEHAVIORS All Vermont v. Community High School of Vermont (CHSVT)

ITEM	GENERAL HS	CHSVT STUDENTS
Parents Ask Daily	50%	16%
Parents Never Ask	9%	53%
Fighting	30%	51%
Car Crash	8%	19%
Drive Under Influence	8%	19%
Attempted Suicide	7%	14%
Alcohol Binge	23%	21%
Tobacco Use	20%	87%
Marijuana	25%	53%
Heroin	3%	46%
Sex	35%	98%
Sex < 13	6%	35%

Comparisons on selected variables in Youth Risk Behavior Survey (Vermont Health Department) and a complete survey of all students in CHSVT, 2003

Youth in Department of Corrections:

- The proportional rate of youth under 18 supervised by the state Department of Corrections (DOC) is relatively small in relation to the overall number of residents supervised by that department. Still, a 2003 task force report on prison over-crowding noted that 1 in 8 eighteen year-old Vermonters were under DOC supervision.

- The majority of convictions leading youth to DOC are for minor offenses including possession of malt beverage or marijuana, motor vehicle violations, and petit theft.
- DOC youth supervisees were primarily not in the juvenile justice system; according to DOC data, 75% of new entrants have had no history as delinquents.

Other relevant demographics from DOC data:

- The majority of people involved with DOC are 20 – 24 years old.
- Large numbers of individuals supervised, and the majority of those incarcerated have not completed high school, and there are large proportions of individuals with learning disorders who did not have success in school.
- Males tend to enter DOC during the 19 – 23 year-old transition years
- Females enter during their middle to late 20's. These women generally have children, histories of trauma and domestic violence, poverty, low educational attainment, and substance abuse and addiction that have developed beyond their control.
- There has been a startling trend over the last five years for more women to be incarcerated. They are generally detained for multiple offenses and violations of release conditions rather than the severity of their crimes as is more typical with incarcerated males.
- The growing percentage (25%) of women in corrections is partially driven by a declining trend of men entering that system.

Youth in Department for Children and Families, and youth transitioning out of foster care:

- During the past 6 years, there have been stable numbers (about 650 per year) of new entrants to DCF supervision for delinquent and unmanageable / status offense reasons.
- The DCF-operated Woodside Juvenile Detention Center has had stable admissions for 8 years @ an average of 363 per year.
- Gender distribution among the delinquency and CHINS caseload remains steady @ approximately 1/3 female
- Minority race among youth involved in DCF youth justice averages 2- 4% for the 2001 – 2005 time period. This coincides with a statewide minority youth rate of 4%.
- Transitioning youth: when 12 – 18 year-old status offending and delinquent youth are discharged from the custody of DCF,
 - 44% return to their parents, and
 - 39% leave to 'emancipation' or 'unknown'.

The nearly 40% of youth who are discharged to emancipation are likely to have scarce supports and safety net to assist them in their transition to adulthood, which, current research shows, occurs roughly by the age of 24, rather than the legal age of 18.

Estimates from the state's unified AHS database related to youth and justice show that:

- 30% of 18 – 21 year-olds involved with adult corrections have a history of involvement with the child welfare / juvenile justice system
- Approximately 50% of youth with child welfare / juvenile justice system histories have later contact with adult corrections

High School Completion:

- The 'longitudinal' high school completion rate (most accurate) is 86%.
- 'Event dropout rate' (how many seniors graduate at year end) has declined to a 10-year low. 92% of seniors graduate.

In VT, 10 of 67 schools have a dropout rate higher than 20%.

VT Coalition of Homeless and Runaway Youth Programs (VCHRYP):

During the last five years, the regional VCHRYP programs have experienced steadily increasing demand for services from needy youth and their families. 1,089 youth were served through Basic Center and Transitional Living programs. In addition, another 1,118 youth received brief, immediate services from the VCHRYP centers or outreach staff.

42% of youth served were 'on the street homeless' at intake; only 2% were still homeless at close of service.

The largest categorical service referrals were for:

1. family conflict, 49%, and
2. homelessness, 38%

Services provided through this network keep youth and families out of state custody, and provide crisis stabilization, food and shelter, support and case management services and referrals leading to safety and necessary supports and treatment.

Most services are provided to youth aged 13 – 20, peaking at ages 15 – 17.

In its 2004 annual report *Kids Count*, the A.E. Casey Foundation identified 4 primary risk factors for youth transitioning successfully to adulthood:

1. Teens transitioning out of foster care.
 - 41% transition to emancipation, runaway, or unknown placement. This national data is mirrored by VT trends.
2. Youth in the juvenile justice system, especially those incarcerated.
 - In VT, very few youth are incarcerated. Detention before or at initial hearing is rare. Incarcerative sentences are almost always for treatment needs of offenders at-risk to others.
 - VT lacks adequate youth placement options pre-detention and as alternative to detention
 - Most 16 and 17 year-old youth who commit crimes are in the adult corrections system
 - Only 25 - 30% of Corrections new contacts have had contact w/ the JJ system. Estimated 50% or fewer youth w/ DCF histories have contact with DOC.
3. Teen parents
 - Vermont has a very low rate

4. High school dropouts
 - 86% high school completion. There is no statewide leadership in addressing causes of high school dropout and disengagement of youth.

Primary, underlying risk factors to successful transitions are:

- Untreated mental health disorders
- Substance abuse
- Learning disorders, poor school success, educational failure
- Poverty, lack of opportunities and role models